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party to present a pig. The pig is supposed to be sacrificed to a goddess, *Ka 'lai synshar*, i.e. the goddess of the State, but it is invariably eaten by the Siem and the members of the durbar. The Siem then calls out "*Iomto no khyerow*" (is it not so, young people?) The members of the durbar then reply, "*Iaoid iomto khein khyerow*" (yes, it is so, young ones). Sentences of fine are more often resorted to than other punishments nowadays, probably because very few of the Siems possess jails for the reception of criminals. The condemned one in a criminal case frequently serves his time by working for the Siem as a menial servant. The above description, which is based on the account given by the Rev. W. Lewis, with some modifications, may be taken as the usual form of procedure of the Khasi durbar.

Under the heading of decision of disputes we may perhaps give a short description of some of the punishments which were inflicted by the Siems and their durbars in criminal cases in ancient times. Murder was punishable by beating the culprit to death with clubs (*thi tongpa bi lymbon*). The killing, however, of a *nong shah sah*, i.e. a man who seeks for human victims to sacrifice to the monster, *u thlen*, is not considered murder, even now by the Khasis, and the slayer of the *nong shah sah* only has to inform the Siem and deposit Rs. 5, and one pig in the Siem's court. The slaying of a robber also is dealt with in like manner.

The punishment of adultery was imprisonment for life (*ka sah dein mar*), or a fine of Rs. 1,100, and one pig (*ka khadawai spah wei dah*). Whether such a heavy fine was ever paid is perhaps doubtful, and probably some other form of punishment was substituted for it. A husband finding his wife and a man in *flagrante delicto* could, as under the law of the ancients, kill both adulterer and adulteress without punishment for murder. He was, however, bound to deposit Rs. 5, and the conventional pig in the Siem's durbar. The punishment for rape (*kaba khmat tyngo*) was imprisonment for life in the case of the woman being married, and a heavy fine and one pig if the woman was a spinster. Arson was punishable with imprisonment for life, or a heavy fine. The punishment for causing people to be possessed by devils (*ka ka ai-kmaid briew*) was

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munies. The Lyunganas possess no head-hunting customs, so far as it has been possible to ascertain. These people are still wild and uncivilized. Although they do not, as a rule, give trouble, from an administrative point of view, a very serious dacoity, accompanied by murder, was committed by certain Lyunganas at an Assamese village on the outskirts of the Lyungnas country a few years ago. The victims were two Marwari merchants and their servant, as well as another man. These people were brutally murdered by the Lyunganas, and robbed of their property. The offenders were, however, successfully traced and arrested by Inspector Raj Mohan Das, and several of them suffered capital punishment, the remainder being transported for life.

774 of the thlen owner. It is also said of the snake
773 that it can reduce itself to the size of a thin
782 thread and therefore can easily find a place in a basket or earthern jar. Others even say that it has the power to change itself into a cat or a rooster or a stone and to stay with the owner in this form.

774 The possession of the thlen is a valuable
782 thing for the owner; for where the thlen makes
682 his home, it brings good fortune and wealth to the family. However, the snake only does this on the condition that it is provided with human blood. If it does not receive this, it announces itself from time to time in the family concerned during the night in a dream. If its desires are still not fulfilled, it then comes bringing sickness, misfortune, impoverishment, and the like. There is nothing that the owner can do other than satisfy or propitiate the thlen by human murder. In the night he waits for his victim alone or with another whom he has hired for this purpose. Often the thlen worshippers have a so-called nongbylla, i.e., a wage earner who shares the wealth of his master for his efforts without having to bother with other work. He goes out in ambush with his master and watches hidden from the heights of a mountain, or along the road, or at the edge of the forest to see whether anyone is coming along the way. By signs or shouts he warns his master who is waiting some distance away, and then they commit the murder together. Both are usually disguised and armed with a wooden club for killing their victim. The ordinary people call these murderers in the service of the thlen as well as the thlen worshippers in general only nongshoh noh, literally, killers. They may not use iron weapons for committing their dark deeds, as iron proved to be fatal for the thlen tribal father, as was told

776 above. The tips of the hair and the finger-
• 482 nails of the slain person are cut off with
782 silver shears; then the murderer pricks the wings of the nose with a silver lancet and catches the blood that flows out in a bamboo tube. This is called pjar snan. Again no dish or iron or metal may be used for catching the blood.

). The Offering of the Sacrifice.

782 The thlen owner now asks the oracle about
776 the actual time when he should sacrifice the blood to the thlen. When this is revealed, the whole family gathers together in the hut of the thlen owner (male or female) in the dark night-time. The doors are opened and costly clothes are spread out on the floor. The blood of the slain person is poured into a brass dish or a plate (ka pliang); the hair and fingernails are placed there. One member of the family begins to strike a small drum and cries while doing it: "O uncle, o father, come forth, we have done everything to make thee satisfied, and now we have succeeded. (776) Give us thy blessing, so that we may receive health and wealth!" They say that the thlen is only seen by the members of the household of the owner. No matter what form it otherwise has while staying in the house, at the sacrifice of human blood it appears in its true form as a snake. It is supposed to crawl out of its hiding place when called upon, then stretch itself out until it has attained its full size. It approaches the platter and waits a while in front of it until the spirit of the slain person appears standing on the platter. The spirit is supposed to laugh. The snake now begins to swallow the entire form, beginning with the feet; the victim is supposed to laugh continuously. Obviously it is difficult to find out

How Do the People Accept These Facts?

a) The Fear among the People

[172 174] A great fear of these murderers who are in the service of the Uhlen permeates the whole life of the Khasi; this feeling is still especially strong in the kingdoms of Cherra, Nyillen, and Nongkrem. Naturally they guard themselves well from people who are supposed to be in possession of a devil snake and they often do not even dare to speak their names out loud for fear that misfortune could befall them. Many of them are certainly known by the people; others are just guessed at. We tried very hard to get a photograph of such people who are considered to be Uhlen owners; but we met only with complete refusal from them. Their bad consciences probably made them fearful. I was able to photograph the house of a woman Uhlen worshipper in Mawsrai, several [12] miles away from Cherra. In contrast to most of the Khasi huts, indications of wealth were evident on the outside, since the [128] hut was covered with tin. In spite of all my pleas the woman could not be prevailed upon to have herself photographed. Such an idea frightened her so that she cried out loud: "O, we are investigated so much!"

[172 174] At night a Khasi does not readily trust himself alone outside of his hut. If he is overtaken by darkness on the way home, he may be seen hurrying towards his home, singing or calling in a loud voice from time to time to give himself courage. A single man, even if he does not have to go far from his hut to work is not likely to go without his big knife -- ka wait -- under his arm to protect himself against all possible attacks. The people usually go together (in groups)

• 674 on the way to or from more distant markets.
675 When they go to the even bigger markets which are several days' journey away, they only go to the markets where they have good friends along the way, where they can spend the night. Even the missionary has to endure this general feeling of fear. For example, if he has to send something from one place to another which one man could easily carry; or if he is on a journey when he might like to send on his small amount of luggage, his laundry, and food. Even if the place is only a day distant, it is not possible for him to hire one man for such an errand. There is nothing for him to do other than to hire two porters and naturally also to pay them, or to wait until a group of market people are going along the same way, to whom a single man can attach himself. If you criticize the people for the foolishness of their behavior or the inconveniance it causes, their simple answer is: "I am afraid of the nongshon noh" (killers).

672 On the other hand the people defend themselves
776 against such criminals. According to ancient Khasi justice, the killing of such a nongshoh noh is not considered murder and is not punished by death. Whoever has killed a nongshoh noh does not need to do more than he who kills a robber, namely to give 5 rupees (7 gold marks) and a pig to the S'iem (king). In the kingdom of Nongkrem the official lyngdoh has the right to confiscate all the property of those persons who are convicted for harboring an evil spirit -- jingbih -- in their house. The lyngdohs can keep the objects of value for themselves, while the house, including contents, is burned down. At the same time the people take justice into their own hands. In the year 1909 one of these murderers in the service of the devil snake was caught in the act in Nongkrem. Without more ado his nose was cut off and he was let go with the mark of Cain.

776 owners can only conceal this for any length of
573 time with difficulty. Now when the woman gathers the members of her household and the unsuspecting man together for the thlen sacrifice, this man dashes out from fright and tells the horrible things that he has seen. He never returns to his wife by whom he was deceived by the concealment of such an important condition and he seeks another wife.

776 [229] The accounts of previous thlen owners
• 482 finally give further information. I will only
783 introduce one case as it was told by one of these. I am indebted for this to the kindness of the missionary in Cherrapunji, P. Corbinian Bonheim S.V.D. who has been there many years and to whom a former thlen owner related his experiences. This he translated into our language as follows:

"Formerly we were very poor people. Then one day we found a wonderfully beautiful smooth stone on the mountain when we were chopping wood, and we brought it home and preserved it. From this time on we had good luck everywhere; every undertaking succeeded, we never had losses and our fortune increased from day to day and even at gambling we never lost. Gradually we became rich people. Thus matters continued for four or five years. Then I had a strange dream. A woman appeared to me who said to me: "Look, I have given you such great wealth, now I also demand a sacrifice of you. You should sacrifice a lang thoh khlih to me, i.e., a goat with a spotted head." The next morning I told my dream to the members of the household, and they thought that she was the goddess who was demanding the sacrifice owing to her. So we sacrificed a goat. But soon after I had a dream again and the same voice as before spoke to me again: "I have demanded ka lang thoh khlih of you and you only gave me a goat. The goat, however, that I demand,

776 682 783 is human blood ka snam briu!" The next morning I told my dream again and all my relatives were frightened, for they knew now that it was the thlen devil and not the goddess who made them rich. But now we had to decide what we would do: give up all our wealth and possession or fulfill the will of the thlen. We decided to do the latter. But we let week after week go by until the thlen began to threaten that he would consume our whole house. Now we went, my brother and I out stalking to see if we could murder someone. We saw a woman from our village go alone to the forest to gather wood. We crept after her and when we thought the moment was right we fell upon her with blows and beat her till she was dead. Immediately thereafter, however, we fled deeper into the forest with the intention of taking the blood from the slain woman somewhat later when we could do it undisturbed. But after a while the woman came to her senses and luckily escaped back to the village by a different way. When she arrived home she told what had happened and named the two of us brothers as her murderers. Her relatives went at once to the chief and accused us. When we now came out of our hiding place to get the blood from the woman who we supposed was dead, we found to our astonishment that she had disappeared. We hurried along the road to pursue her but we could not find her anywhere. When we came home we were told at once that a woman had luckily escaped from murderers, but that it was still questionable whether she would live. We, however, wished secretly that she would die. But the chieftain had commanded that the woman be cared for carefully. When she had so far recovered that she could come to a judicial meeting, the chieftain ordered all the inhabitants of the village to the gathering. Our hands and feet trembled, and stuttering we confessed our

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guilt. The chieftain then said to us: "You will pay the woman the entire cost of her care and agree that I have your thlen driven out and that you give up your property; if you will do that, nothing more will be done to you. A hut where you can live temporarily, a cloth (130) so that you can at least cover your honor, and rice which you need will be given you by the village until you can again save something. But if you do not wish to do that then a severe punishment will be meted out to you without mercy or pity." We submitted to the judgment of the chieftain. He then had all our possessions carried away and our house burned down to the ground. And when we had moved into the hut which was built for us by the inhabitants of the village at the command of the chieftain, lo, this wonderful stone was there. We reported this to the chieftain and he took counsel with his elders as to what should now be done. They came to the conclusion that at the time of the first exorcism the lyngdoh had not given us the command to go home directly without looking around. We had looked around and therefore the thlen had come to us again. Therefore the chieftain now commanded that the expulsion and exorcism and destruction should be undertaken again. This time we went straight home without looking around and so we were then free of the thlen. We have never seen the thlen itself." This much the report of the thlen worshipper.

The Position of the English-Indian Government in Respect to these Human Sacrifices.

But is it possible, many will ask, that such crimes can occur in a British province of the Indian Empire? Why are such things not called to the attention of the English government and why

471 does the government not interfere? These things
472 are known by the English government and it did and does its best, although the Khasi Mountains still possess their independence in part. Thorough mention of this superstitious immoral custom was made in the administrative report of the government concerning the Khasi Mountains and the Jaintia Mountains of the year 1881-82. Attached to it was the decision of the head of the government of Assam at that time (Chief Commissioner), dated August 5, 1882, in which among other things he stated: "Among the cases, which received judicial treatment in this year, were three murders of quite particular heinousness: two occurred to harmless old women, one to a boy. In none of these cases was a suitable reason given, and it is believed of at least two of them that they are connected with the remarkable superstition of the thlen." After a presentation of this superstitious custom the report continues: "Many families in these mountains are known as thlen supporters or are suspected of being so and are therefore feared and avoided. Whenever a dead body is found with the marks described above (blood drawn off through the nostrils, hair, and fingernails cut off) and especially when death is not caused by a wound but by strangulation, it may be assumed with almost absolute certainty that the purpose of the murder was the propitiation of the thlen. This was observed in one of the three cases indicated; in the two others these signs could not be found; however, since there was no cause at all for a murder, it was more than probable that these two are also to be ascribed to the horrible superstition. In each of these three cases one or two persons were convicted although they might not have been the only guilty

[illegible] Khasi [illegible]

[illegible] 192
194 ones; one man was hanged and the rest were sentenced to exile either of many years or for life."

There are also cases of murder in the following years in the government reports which are ascribed to the thlen superstition. Particularly noticeable and indicative was a case which occurred in the year 1930. The murder was committed only about ten miles from Shillong, the seat of the English government of Assam, about several hundred meters to one side of the government road, which leads from there to Cherrapunji. No trace of the murderers could be discovered, since the inhabitants of the nearby village did not care to appear as witnesses against them because of their superstitious fear that this would invite the revenge and anger of the thlen. They much preferred putting up with the government's sending to the village as a punishment a division of military policemen who had to be housed and maintained by the inhabitants for a whole year at a great sacrifice. These are the great difficulties with which the government has to struggle in spite of their best will; with the conditions that obtain there it is not at all difficult to have a person vanish without any trace; but if such a case of murder does come to daylight, it is still a long way to the punishment of the guilty ones because of the lack of witnesses or their refusal to testify. An improvement here can only come from the inside by a change in their religious views. At any rate it is a comfort for Europeans to know that their blood as well as the blood of any foreigner who is not a Khasi is not at all acceptable to the thlen and would not suffice to propitiate him.

[illegible] and so long as the expiatory sacrifice, in the form of pigs and goats, determined by the elders of the family and by the sacrificial priest (lyngkoit) has not been offered, the sinning member is considered excluded from the family and the family sacrifices. But even after being accepted again a certain stain still clings to him.

But it is also the duty of the clan mother to care for the needs of the members of her family clan with regard to food, clothing, and the like. She divides the fruits of the harvests according to the needs of the individual. She goes or sends to market to trade, to buy, or to sell. She takes care of the common purse and even the masculine members of the clan have to ask her for money when they wish to drink rice liquor or buy clothing. There the clan mother is generous rather than niggardly. This dependent relationship of the men is not considered unworthy at all or shameful. It is the matriarchal form and ancient custom. Nevertheless, the position of the men in the family clan is an esteemed one. Even the name they are called by has an important sound: Rangbah, Basan (oldest male, adviser). On them falls often the work in the field and wood or the protection of the family; bow and arrow are handed to them as cradle gifts. In the more important family matters the clan mother consults with them. At the giving of the name, during a wedding, a funeral, or cremation the clan mother steps almost completely into the background, also during quarrels and court hearings before the chief (Dolloi) or king (U Iawi). She is still always influential with her advice, but the actual appearance, activity and judgment is the business of the men. The smaller, everyday sacrifices she performs in the clan but, but she can also let them /135/ be performed by her sons. At larger sacrificial ceremonies which are offered by several family clans at the same time, by whole villages or even by one of the Khasi states, only the men are active as sacrificial priests.

With regard to the husbands of the clan mother and of the feminine members, they are not considered members of the family clan of the women at all. They are only considered the begetters. They work and live in their own clan, participate in their sacrifices and burial places. The father has no further influence in the raising of the children, who belong entirely to the clan of the mother. But usually they have no obligation, unless the wife and children are impoverished. Even then their care comes in second place after that of members of their own clan. Nevertheless the husband is honored and is addressed by "Mr." (kyrad) by his wife. She would consider it disgraceful to approach him impertinently. Where the property of a clan has been dissolved or Christian customs introduced, the husband lives and works together with his wife and children.